

# TheVOTER

# LWW ANNUAL MEETING

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS\*  
OF ROCHESTER METRO AREA

**Thursday, June 11, 2026**

5 P.M. – 7 P.M.

Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word

597 East Ave, Rochester New York

See Page 3 for Registration Link



## NYS Primary Elections - June 23, 2026

All Democrats registered in Monroe County have a primary in June. Republicans' only primary is in the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly District. The Monroe County Working Families Party's only primary is in Gates.

If you are not sure if there is a primary in your area, use this link to find out:

<https://www.monroecounty.gov/elections-voter#vstatus>

**Early in-person voting** is June 13 - 21, 2026

Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, & Friday: 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Tuesday & Thursday: 12:00 noon - 8:00 P.M.

During early voting you can vote at any location in the county. To find an early voting location near you, use this link:

<https://www.monroecounty.gov/elections-earlyvoting>

Find candidate information at <https://www.vote411.org>.

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## President's Letter

### Democracy Is Not a Spectator Sport

For years I have used the phrase “Democracy is not a spectator sport”. However, I did not know that its origin story is in the League of Women Voters, said by Lotte Sharfman (1928-1970) who was President of the Massachusetts League of Women Voters and a Holocaust survivor. Democracy is not something that simply happens around us. It depends on people choosing to participate, staying informed, and engaging with their communities. While voting is one of the most visible ways we participate, democracy also grows stronger when people attend public meetings, discuss issues respectfully, help neighbors access information, and encourage others to make their voices heard. In every election cycle, we are reminded that democracy works best when citizens take an active role in shaping it.

As we approach the midterm elections, that responsibility becomes especially important. Midterm elections may not receive the same level of attention as presidential elections, but their impact is significant. Local and state officials elected during midterms make decisions that affect our schools, healthcare systems, housing policies, transportation, public safety, and voting access. These races often shape our daily lives more directly than we realize.

Since voter turnout in midterm elections is lower than in presidential election years, every vote carries even greater weight. Preparing now — by checking voter registration, learning about candidates and issues, and understanding voting options — helps ensure that every eligible voter can participate confidently.

There are also many ways to support democracy beyond casting a ballot. The League of Women Voters - Rochester Metro Area welcomes volunteers who want to help strengthen citizen participation in our community. Some volunteers assist with voter education efforts by helping maintain [Vote411](#) information, participating in voter registration, or staffing community outreach tables at local events. Others contribute behind the scenes through communications, event planning, data entry, translation support, or social media outreach.

Volunteering does not require special expertise or a large time commitment. Whether someone can help for a few hours during election season or participate more regularly throughout the year, every contribution matters. Volunteers not only support the League's mission but also help ensure that all community members have access to the information and resources they need to participate fully in civic life.

Participation is one of the most powerful ways to strengthen our communities and our democracy. Each conversation, each informed vote, and each act of volunteer service helps build a more engaged and representative society. As the midterm elections approach, we encourage everyone to stay informed, make a plan to vote, and consider how they might help others participate as well. Democracy depends on all of us.

Julie Burns, [VP@LWV-RMA.org](mailto:VP@LWV-RMA.org)

## LWV-RMA Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 11, 2026, 5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.

Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word

597 East Ave, Rochester, New York

Registration deadline is Tuesday, June 9

[Register Here](#)

It is time to gather and conduct our business. We will meet to:

- Give our "Making Democracy Work" award to the Rochester Rapid Response Network
- Give the "Carrie Chapman Catt" award to Deb Gordon and Cathy Kane
- Give "You Make Us Proud" awards to
  - Valerie O'Hara
  - Donna Gardner
  - Evelyn Jennings
  - Connor O'Brien
- Vote on the proposed budget
- Elect new officers and directors
- Reaffirm our position on Land Use
- BRAINSTORM! Generate ideas for how to maximize our mission for the 2026 midterm elections

There is a preparatory document available with all that you need to know to be an informed voter. You'll find it on the members' page when you log into the website. If you encounter any problems logging in or finding it, reach out to [president@lww-rma.org](mailto:president@lww-rma.org) and let us know if you'd rather get help logging in or just have us email it to you as an attachment.

PLEASE NOTE: the preparatory document is over 20 pages long, so please don't wait till the last minute or you won't have a chance to read all the annual reports on the cool things we've done this year.

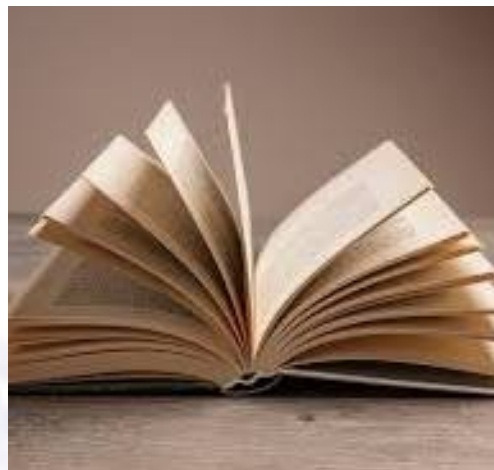
**DECISIONS  
ARE MADE BY  
THOSE WHO  
SHOW UP**



### **Book Club discusses issues of the migrant experience.**

The LWV-RMA Book Club met via Zoom on May 21 to review *Children of the Land* by Marcelo Hernandez Castillo. Castillo is a noted poet who has shared his family's long-term issues with the US immigration authorities in such a way that readers can understand the ongoing fears facing those who live and work in the US while in immigration limbo.

Arrangements for the next meeting will be shared at a later date. More information on upcoming meetings and planning for the 2026-2027 year will be provided in later issues of The Voter.



## Civic Education Forums Update

### May Forums

#### Combating Misinformation on Social Media Through Crowdchecking

On May 12, Adam Shenxiong Li, a third-year Ph.D. student at the University of Rochester Simon Business School, provided an historical perspective on why traditional fact-checking does not work on social media. He demonstrated how users of X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram can identify and counter the spread of false information. The Zoom presentation can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/051226Zoom>

#### Telling Facts from Fiction on the Campaign Trail, Part 1

On May 27, Sarah Burns, a fellow at the Quincy Institute and a Professor of Political Science at Rochester Institute of Technology discussed misinformation techniques. See page 11 for a summary of her presentation and a link to view it on Zoom.

### Upcoming Forums

Monday, June 15, from 6:30 to 7:30 P.M.: NYS Supreme Court Justice Kevin Nasca, via Zoom, will provide an overview of the NY State Court system and the responsibilities of the various Judges we elect. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/LWVRMA061526>

Wednesday, July 22, Professor Sarah Burns will present Part 2 of "Telling Facts from Fiction on the Campaign Trail." This session will focus on fact-checking methods. A registration link will be on the LWV-RMA calendar during June.

Tuesday, August 18, at 6:00 P.M.: Monroe County Board of Elections Commissioners will discuss why voters in the county should feel that their votes will be secure and counted accurately. This will be an in-person seminar at the Henrietta Library Community Room. A registration link will be available in June.





Barbara Grosh at Youth Day



Evelyn Jennings and Laurie Pierce at Church of the Ascension

## Outreach to New Americans Committee

In May the Outreach to New Americans Committee started distributing our easy-to-read pamphlet to new citizens at naturalization ceremonies. We're hopeful that new citizens will use the QR code to access VOTE411 for all the information they will need to vote in this year's elections.

We tabled and gave a presentation on voting at the Church of the Ascension Coffee Hour on Sunday, April 26.

We also tabled at a Youth Day event sponsored by the Bhutanese Community of Greater Rochester on May 16. Barbara Grosh spoke to the group about the importance of voting and why their votes matter, and we talked and shared information with some of the young people and their parents in the audience.

*Submitted by Evelyn Jennings*  
[NewAmericansOutreach@LWV-RMA.org](mailto:NewAmericansOutreach@LWV-RMA.org)



## Obituary: Former LWV-RMA Co-President Gloria Read

We are sorry to share the news that Gloria Read, LWV-RMA Co-President from 2014-2016, passed away on April 25, 2026.

Upon joining LWV-RMA in 2012 Gloria became active on the Membership Committee. In 2014 she was elected Co-President with Mary Hussong-Kallen. She attended both National and State Conventions, introduced speakers and welcomed members at forums and televised debates, and helped plan membership meetings. She was a LWV-RMA member until 2022.

An article in the April 2016 Voter had the following quote, "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

Gloria is survived by her children, Carla Gavin and Scott Read. Her memorial service was on May 11, 2026.

## LWV-RMA Annual Membership Report

LWV-RMA has 180 members on the LWVUS roster as of April 30, 2026. This is a net decrease of 14 members since last year. New interest in the League was strong with fifty-two people joining since June 1, 2025. This compares with 64 joining in the same time period last year.

New members receive a welcome email inviting them to First Friday, providing them with a link to The Voter, requesting them to complete our interest survey, introducing them to our website, and providing a user-id/password to sign up for events. New members are also invited to meet with Volunteer Coordinator Kim Byers to discuss opportunities to get involved in the League.

As part of the Annual Program Meeting in January, members were invited to meet with committee chairs to learn more about the work and the needs of the various committees.

Between June 2025 and May 2026, 66 members were dropped from the LWVUS roster of current LWV-RMA members. Members drop off the LWVUS list if they have not paid dues within 45 days of the due date. The 66 were a mix of long-time members and new members. We believe that some of the decrease is due to the transition to the new payment systems with LWVUS, because payment reminders are coming from LWVUS.

The LWV-RMA membership team has begun sending additional dues reminder notices. The membership committee will continue to analyze the situations behind the decrease, with the goal of making it easy to join the League and get connected to the committee work that drives each member's interest and passion.

*Submitted by Mary Micket and Kim Byers*

### Welcome New Members

Two new members joined LWV-RMA in April. Please welcome Maaja Secon and Cheri Magin.



**Join First Friday** for social time at I Square in Irondequoit - 400 Bakers Park, Rochester, NY 14617 - at 11:30 A.M. on the first Friday of each month.

We gather in the space behind the partition (look for our sign) for lunch and discussion.

Come when you can, leave when you must. We share ideas for how the League can make democracy work and discuss the news to parse what it all means. It's always comforting to be surrounded by League friends who are committed to empowering voters and protecting democracy. Join the fun!

## Voter Services Annual Report for July 2025 - June 2026

### Summary

With an increased level of interest in November's midterm election, we have welcomed several new volunteers and members to our Voter Services Team. Our primary focus continued to be on low registration and low turn-out districts. New venues for registration and literature distribution were added this year.

A new Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) effort was employed this year. Voting information was shown on terminals in the RTS Transit Center for the entire month of October.

### Voter Registration

Events took place at a variety of venues such as:

- Several community meals and food pantries, including Third Presbyterian Church and St. Peter's Pantry
- House of Mercy
- Several festivals and walk/run events
- Bridging Communities - A Riverside Celebration on Driving Park Avenue Bridge
- Lyell-Otis Community Uplift
- Mammography Screening at School 33
- Halloween events at the Public Market
- Cameron Ministries Clean Sweep Resource Fair
- Hall of Justice Career and College Fair
- MLK Celebration at the Rochester Museum and Science Center
- Seneca Towers and Plymouth Gardens senior residences
- Wear Orange to Prevent Gun Violence event
- Back to School Events sponsored by the Office of Violence Prevention
- College campuses including Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Rochester, and Nazareth University
- National Voter Registration Day at the Central Public Library in conjunction with Lush Cosmetics, the national League's partner for this event.

### Get Out the Vote

- Canvassing for the primary election in June is being planned with the Urban League.
- Congratulatory post cards were sent to Monroe County residents turning 18 years old, reminding them of their ability to vote.

Continued on Page 9



## Voter Services Annual Report - Continued

### Additional Activities:

- Meeting with GRIT (Greater Rochester Integrity and Truth) based in Fairport to talk about volunteering for voter registration efforts and joining the League
- Adding new items to our tabling materials:
  - bracelets with the 411.org URL and Your Vote is Your Power messaging
  - palm cards concerning disinformation
  - palm cards with immigrants' rights
- Redesigning chapter business cards to include our QR code and email address
- Updating "Who Represents You" cards because LWVUS version is very limited
- Purchasing two stair-climber wheeled crates to help volunteers move supplies on stairways more easily
- Completing surveys and returning them to LWNYS

*Submitted by Cathy Kane and Deb Gordon*

[VoterServices@LWV-RMA.org](mailto:VoterServices@LWV-RMA.org)



## Naturalizations

There were 14 candidates for naturalization on May 19, and 11 new citizens registered to vote. The Honorable Frank Geraci presided at the Federal Building, and Margaret Supinski and David Newman represented the League.

*Submitted by Margaret Supinski*

[Naturalizations@lww-rma.org](mailto:Naturalizations@lww-rma.org)

## Criminal Justice Reform

The Criminal Justice Reform Committee works to advocate for incarcerated individuals in Monroe County Jail, who might be unaware that they have the right to vote. If an individual is incarcerated in a New York State county jail and is serving a misdemeanor sentence, or is awaiting pre-trial or testimony before a Grand Jury, they have the right to vote. In addition, an individual who was released from prison also has the right to vote.

In May through October of 2025, Monroe County Jail agreed to civic classes and voter registration in the jail. I was allowed into certain men's and women's units twice a month. Because of their priority on security and safety, they weren't willing to increase League access. I explained to the incarcerated individuals the importance of their participation and why we needed everyone to exercise their right to vote. They listened, asked a lot of questions and some registered to vote. A few were already registered to vote and because they were being released soon, they filled out absentee ballot requests.

This year, the Monroe County Jail wanted to initiate a different process for voter registration. Last year, classroom space was an issue and not always available. They asked if I would develop a video that they would send out via tablets to their entire population. The video was short and to the point, was approved, and was sent out the last week in April.

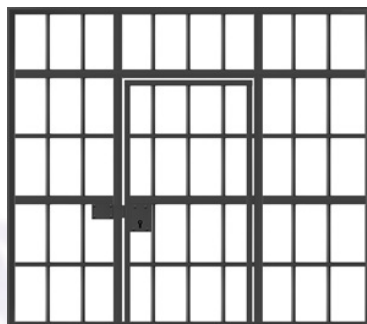
I stressed the importance of in-person contact and the importance of filling out forms correctly to those at the jail whom I deal with. At the end of the video they're told to contact Rehabilitation for information. When they get responses I will be contacted to go into the jail to answer questions or fill out forms. The deputies are pretty enthusiastic about the initiative and I look for positive results. We are also in agreement to use other videos closer to elections.

Last year, The Center for Community Alternatives (CCA), a Rochester reentry organization, invited Barbara Grosh and me to speak about voting at their Fall Town Hall. That led to further discussions for this year. I've contacted both CCA and Reentry Association Western New York (RAWNY) for voter awareness education and registration for this year.

Laurene K. Jennings

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## Civic Education Forum: Telling Fact from Fiction

During a Zoom forum on May 27, Sarah Burns, a fellow at the Quincy Institute and a Professor of Political Science at Rochester Institute of Technology, discussed how to tell facts from fiction in political campaign statements. During this session, she focused on tactics used by politicians to mislead voters. During a follow-up session in July, she will cover methods for fact checking.

Professor Burns noted that there are three kinds of false or misleading statements, each requiring a different reaction:

Misinformation – false but not shared with intent to deceive (can use fact checking);

Disinformation – false and intended to deceive (needs an institutional response);

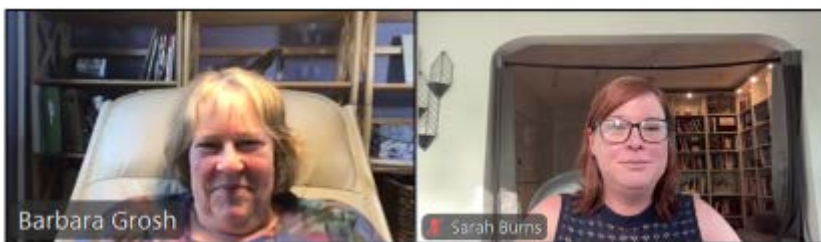
Malinformation – true but used out of context and/or timed to cause harm (can't be debunked if it's technically true).

She also shared that:

- \* The security infrastructure needed to effectively combat DISinformation is being dismantled at the federal level, forcing states and localities to deal with such foreign and domestic threats on their own.
- \* Congress, which should be controlling the security infrastructure, is doing nothing because their voters don't hold them accountable and taking a side could lose them votes.
- \* The process of sharing misleading statements is not caused by, but is made much easier, by artificial intelligence.
- \* Voters can also note their own emotional response to any political information since emotions are used to spread misleading statements.
- \* Voters can also determine not to share any questionable statements until they've checked with a reliable news source and found the same information, and have traced the claims to the original to see if the shared statement/video has been stripped of context.
- \* The new practice of prebunking prepares people against misleading statements before they encounter them. Prebunking Public Service Announcement shown on electronic platforms have made a difference in some recent elections.

A recording of the forum may be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/LWVRMAForum052726>

*Submitted by Judy Wadsworth*



LWV-RMA President Barbara Grosh introduced Professor Sarah Burns at the May 27 Zoom forum.

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If you have comments, article suggestions or pictures to share please send them to [micketeditor@gmail.com](mailto:micketeditor@gmail.com).

## League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion in principal and in practice.

League membership is open to any person who subscribes to the League's purposes and policies.

**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**

Board of Directors:	
President	Barbara Grosh (25-26)
Vice President	Julie Burns (25-26)
Treasurer	Constance Flahive (25-27)
Secretary	Marla Miller (25-27)
Director	Cathy Kane (24-26)
Director	Tess McFarland-Porter (25-27)
Director	Mary Micket (25-27)
Director	Pat Willis (25-26)
Director	Donna Gardner (25-26)
Director	Stephanie Watson (25-27)
Director	Karen Morris (24-26)

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**DEI+Justice:** Julie Burns

[VP@LWV-RMA.org](mailto:VP@LWV-RMA.org)

## Join the League Today!



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check payable to the LWVUS to:

LWV-RMA,  
PO Box 10573  
Rochester, NY 14610

[Or join the LWV online by clicking here.](#)

### MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Dues are payable to LWVUS.

The link on [LWV-RMA.org](http://LWV-RMA.org) will direct you to the LWVUS site. A portion of your dues will be distributed to LWV-RMA and LWVNY.

Suggested dues are \$75, but you may choose any amount of \$20 or more.

Donations may be made directly to LWV-RMA at the same link.